DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 110 898 CG 010 025

AUTHOR Hirsch, Steven R.
TITLE Student Participation in Student Health and Counseling Center Policy from "New Dimensions in Student Health and Counseling Services: Ecological Feedback." Synopsis of Remarks.
PUB DATE 31 Mar 75
NOTE 7p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (57th, San Francisco, California, March 30-April 2, 1975)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS College Students; *Health Services; Higher Education; Program Descriptions; *School Health Services; Speeches; *Student College Relationship; Student Needs; *Student Participation; Student Personnel Services

ABSTRACT

A college senior at the University of Southern California describes the innovation of a Student Health Advisory Committee at USC in accordance with the belief that, since the campus Health Center is student supported, students are entitled to have a direct input into the policies, organization and services offered. This committee is composed of an executive committee which includes the officers of the Advisory Committee, a fixed number of staff members and student members. Students are in the voting majority. Several of the changes instituted by this committee include: (1) installation of individual cubicles where a student may privately discuss a health problem; (2) initiation of a self-help cold clinic; (3) establishment of a pharmacy within the Student Health Center; (4) provision for free legal advice regarding health-related matters; and (5) implementation of various research projects. The Committee has also devised a system by which students and staff may participate in staff selection. (Author/HMV)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED110898

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

SYNOPSIS OF REMARKS

Student Participation in Student Health and Counseling Center Policy

from

"New Dimensions in Student Health and Counseling Services: Ecological Feedback"

Presented to the Fifty-Seventh Annual Conference of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators
San Francisco-March 31, 1975

BY

STEVEN R. HIRSCH,

Senior, University of Southern California, Vice-Chairman, Student Health Advisory Committee

I have been a student at U.S.C. for the past three years. During my first term at the university, I had occasion to visit the Student Health Center. It is doubtful that I will ever forget the massive front counter that protected the staff from the students they were to serve. Maybe this was a symbolic wall. Fortunately, it no longer exists.

About three years ago, several students under the sponsorship of Dr. Klotz formed the Student Health Advisory Committee. It is the contention of the staff that, as a student-supported Health Center, students are entitled to have a direct input into the policies, organization and services offered. This was a unique opportunity for the students.

The Student Health Advisory Committee is composed of an executive committee, combining the student officers of the Advisory Committee, a fixed number of staff members, and student members. Students are in the voting majority and in this way have a direct input into the working policies of the Student Health Center. There are no quotas or restrictions as to the number or scholastic background of participating students.

The committee serves as both an advisory and policy making body. By promoting student participation, student health needs, desires and concerns can be dealth with. As

a result of the formation of this joint student-staff committee, many changes have taken place within the Health Center and many new programs have been implemented.

For example, take the image which remains in my mind of the massive counter which used to be the student's first stop upon his or her arrival at the Health Center. Now imagine about fifteen other students standing behind and around you at the counter. Picture yourself explaining to the receptionist that you think you have contracted a venereal disease, or that, as an unmarried female, you wish a pregnancy test or contraceptive counseling.

As a result of the efforts of the Student Health Advisory Committee, this counter has been removed. In its place we now have two individual cubicles in which a student may privately discuss a health problem or concern with a receptionist. To feel at ease when using a health facility is perhaps a major mark of progress, especially so in an institutional setting.

Health and time are without doubt the most valuable resources available to man. When a student's health, whether physical or mental, becomes problematic or a concern, decreased academic performance is one of the first byproducts. The same is true for improper use of time. With this in mind, the Student Health Advisory Committee has designed a self-help cold clinic. In this way students are able to learn the symtoms of the "common cold" and the appropriate way in which to cope with it, all without seeing a physician. This results in

avoiding the often long wait to see a physician, and, at the same time, saves the time of the staff by not having to constantly treat this usually self-curing malady. Previously, ill students had to fill prescriptions written by Health Center physicians at a commercial pharmacy. It was found that, if a patient really was in discomfort, he would probably not walk to a pharmarcy, but, rather, would return to the dorm and go to bed. Now, as a result of student input, a pharmacy has been established within the Student Health Center to fill prescriptions written by Health Center physicians. This service is free except for a small service charge, resulting in a savings of both time and money to the student. Greater efficiency in the treatment of illnesses has been attributed to the increased percentage of prescriptions filled.

Many students have expressed concern over health and legal probelms and their interaction. As a result, free legal service has been successfully implemented in conjunction with the U.S.C. Health Center. Staffed by an attorney and para-legal personnel, legal advice and even court appearances have resulted.

Environmental health was another concern of the committee whose members felt that decisive action on the part of administration officials was necessary. At U.S.C., nearly 70% of the student body is involved in some sort of laboratory work, whether in the arts, sciences, architecture or engineering. At the iniative of the Student Health Advisory Committee, a subcommittee was formed and eventually submitted a formal report of their inquiry

as to the safety of our laboratories. This student effort has prompted a detailed examination of laboratories by the University safety engineer involving over 600 university laboratories.

Many other activities have been undertaken by this joint student-staff advisory committee. On occasion research projects have been conducted through the Student Health Center. One such study is currently been conducted for the Environmental Protection Agency and involves over two hundred students. Included in this study is a student project coordinator and several other students working in an administrative capacity. This project is unique in that during this school year approximately $10,000 will have been recycled back to students as either subjects or project workers.

Student input at U.S.C. has entered even the hiring policies of the Health Center. We have derived a system by which students and staff members can, on a rotating basis, interview a pre-screened selection of job applicants, whether physicians, nurses, or laboratory personnel. It is a rare opportunity that a student can enjoy the experience of interviewing someone in much the same fashion as his own interview will be conducted when he applies for later employment. Such an experience is invaluable in determining what is expected during an interview and, as a result, will most likely improve the student's performance in his own job interview situations.

The Student Health Advisory Committee at U.S.C. may be considered a major breakthrough. It is one of relatively few opportunities giving students a direct voice in the policies

that directly concern them.

Even though we, as students, lack expertise in the field in which we have chosen to participate, we are able to make significant contributions to the evolution of productive health programs. More importantly, we have come to realize, with the receptiveness of the Director of the Health Center, that education does not and should not be limited to the classroom or laboratory. The real classroom is the university community, and a comprehensive education requires student participation on many different levels.

We, of the Student Health Advisory Committee, have shown that if a faculty sponsor is truly receptive to student input and participation, and if the responsibility of decision making is placed on the shoulders of responsible students, the administrative burden that most of you carry may be substantially lessened.